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History of Andrew Jackson: Pioneer, Patriot, Soldier, Politician, President. By AUGUSTUS C. BUELL. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1904. Two vols., pp. viii, 432; vi, 427.)

Life and Times of Andrew Jackson: Soldier, Statesman, President. By A. S. COLYAR. (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce. 1904. Two vols., pp. xvii, 419; xii, 425-855.)

It is something of a coincidence that two gentlemen who have nurtured as lifetime passions the purpose of writing a life of Jackson should have brought their plans to fruition in the same year. Both have been inspired with the same motive. Both have thought that the large and much-used Parton was lacking in sympathy for the great Tennessean. Both have written glowing, partial, and uncritical accounts of Jackson's career. Mr. Colyar is a lawyer; Buell was a newspaper man. Each has his own distinctive style. The former masses his arguments with an eye to securing the judgment of the average citizen on the jury; the latter writes with the alertness and human interest of the correspondent who works up an interesting incident for the Sunday edition. Neither is a historian. Neither knows deeply the history of the period in which Jackson lived, or estimates properly the forces which at the time bore our national life onward.

Let us see their own words: "I found", says Mr. Colyar (p. 6), referring to his first investigations in the subject, "that two lives had been written—one a book of more than 2,000 pages, written evidently by a man to make money, without any just appreciation of a biography which was to form a part of American history; the other was written by a New England professor, and by a man who evidently, as he shows in his book from the very start, was not a friend of the War of 1812, and that he could not do justice to a general who had been an important factor in that war." For this New England professor the author has a pet dislike, and he comes back to him in the following words: "A Mr. William Graham Sumner, Professor of Practical and Social Science in Yale College, has tried his hand in what is known as 'The American Statesman Series'. . . . This Hartford Convention apologist is put forward by some concerted action to write for the 'American Statesman Series,' which goes into all the libraries, the life of democracy's greatest hero. Surely democracy is unfortunate in the selection of men to take care of the fame of its great idols" (I, 34-35). Mr. Buell did not live to write a preface for his work; but in the preface which the publishers have inserted he is quoted as follows (p. vi): "It is difficult to find a book on American history from the Revolution to this day which does not have something to say about General Jackson. As a rule, the more American a book is in spirit and feeling the more it will say about him and the more favorable its tone of comment will be." These sentences proclaim the purposes of their writers. They have both written "democratic" biographies. Of the two Buell's

is least biased, but neither attains the standard of fair and restrained historical judgment.

After saying this much, one may dismiss Mr. Colyar by mentioning two statements which illustrate his method. He asserts that the news of the American success in the campaign against the Greeks induced the British commissioners to sign the treaty of Ghent, thus "showing that General Jackson made the treaty of Ghent just as much as he fought the battle of New Orleans" (I, 10). Of the fact that the Creek campaign closed eight months before the treaty was signed he makes no mention. Again, one finds the assertion that Jackson was "the finest letter writer (take his letters in all their aspects) that this country has produced" (I, 12-13). This opinion is formed by the author after reading more than a hundred of his hero's letters. If one will examine the vastly larger collection of Jackson letters in the possession of the Library of Congress, he will perhaps come to a different conclusion. This collection, it must be added, has not been examined by Mr. Colyar. That Jackson was a forcible letter-writer no one will doubt; but his style as shown in the drafts and in those letters which did not get the polishing of another hand than his was plain, direct, and commonplace. Frequently his letters had many errors of grammar and spelling. He was, perhaps, of all our Presidents the least acquainted with, and the least fond of, good literature.

Against Mr. Buell's style of expression one cannot bring the charge of dullness. He has written with alertness and clearness. He has given us a personal biography in which an abundance of incident and many amusing anecdotes are introduced. He has a journalist's eye for color. He knows the value of a good story. He has not examined the Jackson manuscripts, but has relied, as he confesses, chiefly on "personal interviews with many eminent men and women" who were associated with Jackson. Among these are F. P. Blair, Sr., from whom he got extensive recollections, the widow of President Polk, and William Allen of Ohio, who came into public life while Jackson was President. All of these were interviewed by the author when they were very old. No student of history needs to be told that evidence like this should be treated with great discrimination. In addition to this we are assured that the biographer has consulted "books and pamphlets and public records almost innumerable"; but the absence of foot-notes gives us no opportunity to see what particular works have been used. Of two very important recent printed sources no use has evidently been made, namely, Professor Jameson's edition of the Calhoun correspondence and Professor R. C. H. Catterall's history of *The Second Bank of the United States*; and from the lack of these authorities his *History of Jackson* goes sadly awry.

Mr. Buell accepts the old story of Clay's influence in bringing on in 1832 the fight for the recharter of the bank. Professor Catterall, however, has shown by ample reference to Biddle's correspondence (*The Second Bank of the United States*, 215-223) that this conflict came

about through the entire knowledge and volition of the president of the bank, and that the matter was not primarily a party measure. It was undertaken after deliberate consideration by the bank officials because they thought that, all conditions considered, it was most likely to lead to a new charter. Moreover, it was not decided upon till early in January, 1832, which was a fortnight after the Baltimore convention had adjourned and a month after Congress had met.

Mr. Buell's facile narrative is full of errors great and small. For example, it is not true that Van Buren was responsible for the recall of Harrison from Bogota (II, 220). Harrison was recalled on March 10, 1829, and Van Buren did not become secretary of state until the last of the same month. It is not apparent that Mrs. Donelson, the mistress of the White House, "yielded to the influence of the Calhoun, Branch, Berrien and Ingham women" (II, 232). Her husband was not favorable to Eaton, and this may have had some influence over her views; but there is nothing to show that in regard to Mrs. Eaton she did not act on her own initiative. In view of the general opinion in Washington on the subject, there was certainly ground enough for her to take a stand without the influence of the cabinet ladies. Neither is it true that Mrs. Donelson returned to the White House after an absence of six months (II, 249). She left in the winter of 1829-1830 and did not return till September, 1831. It is not true, if one may credit the voluminous correspondence on the subject which one finds in Niles, that Ingham in the affair with Eaton used alleys and back-yards in getting to his own house (II, 252). There are in the book serious omissions of facts. What shall we say to a narrative of this kind which dismisses the breach of Calhoun and Jackson in 1831 in eleven lines (II, 240); which gives to the break-up of the cabinet in the same year only sixteen lines (II, 251); and which gives only four lines to the Maysville road bill and nine to Jackson's relations with W. J. Duane? The reluctance with which Jackson broke with the South-Carolinians in regard to nullification receives little consideration (II, 238-240). Benton did not move to Tennessee with his aged mother in 1794. He was then only twelve years old. He left North Carolina in 1799.

JOHN SPENCER BASSETT.

Historic Highways of America. By ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT.
Vols. XIII and XIV. *The Great American Canals.* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company. 1904. Pp. 231, 234.)

THE first volume of this subseries treats of the Potomac Company's canal, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and the Pennsylvania canals. The omission of the many other canals constructed within the United States indicates the author's intention to select from the artificial waterways those which he considers historic instead of making an exhaustive treatment of ways of travel.